

Škoda New Zealand Rally Team Clinches 2024 New Zealand Rally Championship



› **Ben Hunt has claimed the win as the 2024 New Zealand Rally Champion**

Whangārei, New Zealand – Ben Hunt has triumphed as the 2024 New Zealand Rally Champion, securing his third career title, his first since 2019 and the first New Zealand Rally Championship for Škoda.

With the points battle so tight between Hunt and Hayden Paddon, the team knew execution needed to be perfect if they were to secure the title. Hunt with co-driver Tony Rawstorn were disciplined and strategic in their approach to the International Rally of Whangārei, and drove a clean rally comfortably finishing in second place to clinch the championship.

Full time professional rally driver Hayden Paddon would win the rally, but podium finishes at all 6 rounds, alongside power stage points across the season, saw Hunt edge him out in the overall season standings by 4 points.

Dry conditions in Whangārei proved challenging and very tough on tyres. It was a matter of managing tyre life with smooth driving, while also maintaining pace. Something Hunt and the Škoda New Zealand Rally Team now have dialled in with the Škoda Fabia Rally2.

Following the hard fought rally, Hunt was quick to acknowledge Paddon's rally win and remarkable skill. "There's no one else I'd rather finish behind. He's a world-class driver, while we compete in only a few rallies each year. It's been an awesome season for our team and a great weekend to end on." Said Hunt

He also acknowledged the countless hours the team has put into this season's successful campaign.

"So much more goes into every result than just myself or Tony in the car, the Škoda New Zealand Rally Team are fantastic and devote so much of their time. Here at Whangārei we have 12 people helping out and that's time away from family and other commitments so, I honestly can't thank them enough." Said Hunt

And it was elation for the Škoda New Zealand team when the Championship win was confirmed.

"It's an exciting time for Škoda New Zealand as Ben, Tony and the team claim their first National Motorsport Championship in the Škoda. For a brand rich with motorsport history, we're all very proud to see drivers in the New Zealand Rally Championship choosing Škoda. And for Ben to now lock in his third championship against some extremely talented local teams and drivers is a wonderful validation for the brand's sporting pedigree. Said Škoda New Zealand General Manager, Alex Brown

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